

Bayou Cocodrie

National Wildlife Refuge



photo: USFWS



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Bayou Cocodrie NWR
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Refuge Facts

- Established: 1992.
- Located in Concordia Parish, LA.
- Location: The refuge is located 10 miles southwest of Vidalia, LA and 50 miles northeast of Alexandria, LA.

Natural History

- The Nature Conservancy purchased an 11,255.51-acre core tract from the Fisher Lumber Company, a subsidiary of General Motors Corporation. The Conservancy then sold the land to the USFWS over a span of 5 years.
- Cocodrie Bayou is designated as a state scenic river.
- The bottomland hardwoods at Bayou Cocodrie NWR have been noted as some of the last remaining, least disturbed timber in the Mississippi River Delta.

Financial Impact of Refuge

- Three people on staff.
- 5,000 visitors annually.
- Current budget \$330,000.

Refuge Objectives

- To protect some of the last remaining, least disturbed bottomland hardwoods in the Mississippi River Delta.
- To provide wintering habitat for migratory waterfowl.
- To provide habitat for a natural diversity of wildlife.
- To provide habitat for non-game migratory birds.
- To provide opportunities for environmental education, research, interpretation, and wildlife-oriented recreation.

Management Tools

- Law enforcement.
- Partnerships.
- Wildlife management with public hunting.
- Timber management.

Public Use Opportunities

- Hunting.
- Environmental education and interpretation.
- Photography.

Calendar of Events

October, November, January & February: general gun—rabbit and squirrel hunting.

November - January: archery—deer either sex hunting.

November 28 - 29: youth hunt.

November 30 - December 3: muzzleloader—deer either sex hunting.

January 23-31: general gun—woodcock hunting.

Questions and Answers

When will the refuge be open for hiking and birding?

The target date for allowing these non-consumptive public uses is the spring of 1999. The refuge has a working agreement with the local Boy Scout Troop to establish an interpretive boardwalk that meanders part of Cocodrie Swamp.

Will there ever be a modern gun hunt for deer?

The current refuge strategy to reduce the white-tailed deer population by primitive weapon hunting has been extremely successful. The popularity of deer hunting on this medium-sized, three unit refuge and the ridge and swale topography make modern gun hunting somewhat unsafe. As the hunting pressure and interest level subside, a general gun hunt may become plausible.

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Does the refuge allow camping?

The only camping permitted on the refuge is related to environmental education programs conducted by the local scout troops. General camping is not permitted in an effort to avoid direct competition with the nearby private campgrounds.

Will you all ever pave Poole Road?

Poole Road is maintained by the Concordia Parish Police Jury. The public frequently asks this question because of the numerous flat tires they experience when traveling this refuge entry road. The road is a graveled-over railroad tram. Railroad spikes surface during road maintenance and are the primary causes of tire damage. The refuge has assisted the Police Jury with applying for ISTEA funds that would improve Poole Road by paving or re-graveling.

When are they (USFWS) going to get you all some more help?

The current refuge staff consists of three positions, a Refuge Manager, Office Assistant and Engineering Equipment Operator. The current staffing plan also includes a forester position that will be filled in the near future. Additional staffing needs have been identified in the ongoing CCP process. An Assistant Manager, Private Lands Biologist, Outdoor Recreational Planner, Refuge Biologist, and Maintenance Worker were the positions specified to assist implementation of the CCP.